

doubtedly it is the 'unpolitical', middle-class non-specialist, more than the African musicologist in general, who is always equipped to determine what is progressive, nationally acceptable and in accordance with the principles of (Christian) morals. This is why, for Achinivu, the popular music of Lagos, Ibadan, Benin, Enugu etc., that other product of 'acculturation' is only one of "the most effective agents of advertising and attracting customers to one's stall" (p.48). And this is the reason why Harcourt Whyte's music is "progressive", profit or not: "In Europe, Harcourt would have been one of the richest citizens but in his native Nigeria he lived in his fame and died a poor man" (p.28). This is what this wicked, "monster-headed phenomenon" of acculturation, more adequately called imperialism, can do! And it needs *more* than being African to be "better equipped" to understand this, it needs also a theoretical framework, whether African or other, which transcends middle-class ideologies of "fame", status or riches.

#### References cited

Agawu, V. Kofi, 1984, "The impact of language on musical composition in Ghana: An introduction to the musical style of Ephraim Amu", *Ethnomusicology* 28/1: 37-73.  
 July, Robert W., 1983, "Toward cultural independence in Africa: some illustrations from Nigeria and Ghana", *The African Studies Review* 26/3-4: 119-131.

VEIT ERLMANN

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\* MUSIC FROM MOZAMBIQUE, CHOPI TIMBILA. Two orchestral performances recorded in Zavala, Inhambane Province, Mozambique 1981, by Ron and Ophera Hallis. No. FE 4318, Folkways Records, 43 W 61st St. NYC, USA 10023.

Once again Folkways does it...a record of essentially good music that is presented unfinished, with a kind of half-hearted inattention to detail, consistency, accuracy, even typographical layout, that reminds me of the muddled folk guitarist trying to get his guitar in tune who finally sighs, "Well, it's good enough for folk". Perhaps it is good enough for 'folk' but it should not be good enough for Folkways. There are some good moments, both on the record and in the notes, but where is the scholarly and loving attention to detail that could have lifted this record out of the ordinary and done justice to the Chopi, the undisputed masters of xylophone orchestral playing?

The record contains selections from the complete performances of the *timbila* orchestras at Shissibuka (Chisibuka) and Zavale (Zavala). The Chisibuka orchestra, a small group of 8 players and 8 singers, is not outstanding as *timbila* orchestras go, but representative of many groups in out-of-the-way parts of Chopiland who would shine nevertheless in any other company. The recording was made at a special performance with the singers/dancers sitting on the ground, which allows the recordist to get a better balance on their voices against the xylophones, but also loses something of the ebb and flow of energy, the excitement of the full event, as well as the integral repeats, some of which must have been left out for the recording. The Zavala orchestra is one of the five or six top orchestras of the central Chopi, with a long tradition of excellence. It is good to hear their mellow sound in full performance, although they seem to be showing the untidy effect of lacking a powerful leader these days; Cambane does not have quite the brilliance of the famous Katini family, recent leaders at Zavala for nearly forty years.

The recording quality and balance on both orchestras are moderately good. Where was the recordist standing? It sounds to me mostly like the back of the orchestra, next to the *chinzumana* and *dibhinda* (double bass, bass), with occasional forays around the side. Although this is the spot reserved for VIPs, it means that the front-line leaders and the singers, the centre of musical action, are in the distance in microphone perspective. The importance of the songs is undervalued in these recordings; some are there, up front, many others are almost inaudible in the background. A Chopi performance is one of the hardest recording tasks, so I sympathise

with the difficulties. Yet familiarity with the music can prepare the recordist to be in the right place at the right moment, for instance to catch the words which, as Chopi composers insist, must be heard on a recording, especially in the *Mzeno* movement where the emphasis is strongly on the song. On microphones, one disadvantage of a presumably omni-directional mike, anywhere near the dance leader, is that it cannot avoid his unexpected whistle blasts which must have practically modulated the oxide right off the tape at several points.

But to get back to the muddle I was referring to, at no point can the (non-Chopi) listener tell what the players are doing by referring to the notes. Not one movement is demarcated or identified by name, composer, or in any other way. If Hallis has really read Hugh Tracey's book, 'Chopi Musicians', (which he recommends in the notes but spells: Hugh Tracy's book, 'Chope Musicians'), he should show that he has learned at least this from it! Some of the lyrics are patchily transcribed, in an uncritical mixture of phonetic and Portuguese spelling, but printed all run together, so you cannot tell where most of the verses, even the movements or the shouts start and end. The translations, however, do succeed in giving the meat of the words, some of which refer powerfully to the current political climate in Mozambique and to past colonial wrongs.

Without being able to confer with a Chopi musician, this is what I *think* is on the record: Side one, Band one. Chisibuka orchestra.

1. *Mtsitso* introduction. Cycle length: 8 rattle beats.
2. *Mngeno* (?) dance movement. Cycle: x 8 rattle beats. Are the words transcribed? I cannot hear.
3. *Mdano* (?) dance movement, x 16 rattle beats. Words transcribed?
4. *Mzeno* 'slow' song movement, x 16. Words partially transcribed, starting from "Ngononi motsenu chitsungu".
5. *Mabandla* final dance movement, x 8, cut very short, no song.
6. *Mtsitso* introduction used for closing, x 12.
7. *Mtsitso*, ditto, x 24. This one has an interesting tutti phrase on the last 8 beats of each cycle, and alternation between leader and orchestra. Always something new in Chopi music!

Band 2. Zavala orchestra.

1. Spoken introduction by orchestra leader Cambane (described as 'Chopi lyrics!').
2. *Mtsitso*, x 8. 'Short start', i.e. intro by leader and orchestra answer only.
3. *Kuhauzela* shouts, starting "Wemba mkuku..."
4. Same *mtsitso*. Not quite the usual tidy Chopi-style ending — some of the players missed the cue.
5. Shouts, starting, "Vengetile..."
6. Same *mtsitso*.
7. Shouts, starting "Mamanyanou..."
8. *Mtsitso*, x 16. Intro by leader and song only. Movement apparently continued on side 2.

Side two, one continuous band. Zavala orchestra (cont.)

1. Shouts, "Mamanyanou..."
2. Same *mtsitso* as end of Side 1. Words not transcribed.
3. *Mngenisio* (?) dance movement, x 8. Words not transcribed.
4. *Chibhudhu* (?) dance movement, x 8. Words not transcribed.
5. *Mzeno* 'slow' song movement, x 16. Words mostly transcribed, starting "Ngononi motsenu..."
7. *Mabandla* dance movement, x 16. Words not transcribed.
8. *Humiso* (?) exit movement, x 8. Words not transcribed.

The notes do score in this respect: a fine series of twenty photographs and descriptions of the well-known *mbila*-maker, Mbuziane wa Thomo of Zandamela, at work on what is probably a 'Sanje-2' range instrument. Incidentally, when tuning a resonator (photo 18) its pitch is *raised* by widening or *lowered* by narrowing the hole in the frame.

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